

Art & Photography / AnOther Thing I Wanted to Tell You

Benjamin Senior's Geometric Portrayal of Olympic Swimmers

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The GB swimming team is given a brilliantly graphic spin, courtesy of the London-based artist's newest commission



Stroke Tempo, 2016, © Benjamin Senior, courtesy of Counter Editions

Text Maisie Skidmore

"I first got interested in painting people doing exercise because it allowed me to indulge in my favourite things: drawing bodies in the midst of exercise, because that makes them abstract, and drawing abstract geometric patterns. I sort of think of the bodies as being patterns themselves. I constructed the geometric design for the wall behind the swimmers on Photoshop using quarter circles, and incorporated that into the design.

I'm quite a traditional artist really - I spend a lot of time drawing - and most of my work comes out of that. I collaborate with models who are more athletic than me, and who can offer a bit of insight into the sorts of behaviours or postures that athletes will get into while they're training. While all that's going on I'm scribbling down drawings which I can then reassemble into painting.

I'm really interested in 1920s and 30s European modern, but classical modern, art, which is interesting, because a lot of the history of Olympic prints stems from there as well. I suppose you'd say my work's quite nostalgic - hard-edged, very formalised. That's kind of the language that I try and draw on."



Benjamin Senior, *Poolside*, 2013, © The artist

Artist **Benjamin Senior**'s clean, serene paintings feel like a breath of fresh air in the comparative chaos of the digital world. He has long been fascinated with the spectacle of athleticism, transforming habits of health – running, stretching, diving or doing yoga – into reflective scenes worthy of an old 1920s poster distributed by the health service. It follows then, that his work is a natural fit for Counter Editions' official prints for Team GB at the **Rio 2016 Olympic Games** – the four-yearly tournament which begins this Saturday.

Senior, alongside contemporaries Tracey Emin, David Shrigley, Howard Hodgkin and Eddie Peake, was asked to respond to the British Olympic team's winning spirit, and chose to create this tranquil scene of a team of swimmers warming up for a race. His next exhibition is taking place at the end of the year at James Fuentes Gallery in New York, showing a collection of his works around the theme of physical culture.

For more information, see [Counter Editions](#).